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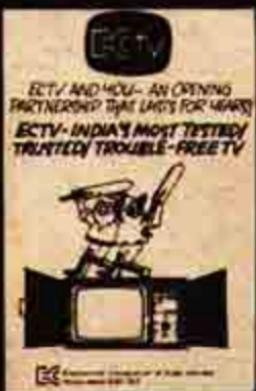
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**PLUS SEVEN COMPLETE STORIES
AND TWELVE OTHER FEATURES**

GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE



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Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

MORE SUNLIGHT, MORE FAIRYTALES

Looking for more comforts in the artificial way, man has deprived himself of nature's invaluable gifts. Looking for more sophisticated amusements, man of today has deprived himself of simple and spontaneous and far superior means of joys.

The first observation is justified by what the scientists have to say about the sunlight (see *Newsflash*). Nothing can be a substitute for this natural gift and it is a must for us. But such is the lifestyle of the modern man—or the city-dweller in particular—that he is obliged to spend most of his time in artificial light.

The second observation is justified by what neurologists have to say. They recommend your reading more fairytales (see *Newsflash* in the last issue) than the stuff that masquerades as literature for young, but which in fact is trash.

Stories that portray only violence, treachery and complicity might help you to understand the world a little, but it is often the wrong side of the world. Reflect calmly and you will see that we live and grow by love, understanding and trust. We cannot live, we cannot act otherwise. They are much more powerful than those negative traits. The plots in the fairytales may be imaginary, but their themes and ideas are not.



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NEWS

Beware of the Moon!

A dictionary will tell you that moon-madness means lunacy — once thought to be connected with the moon's changes.

Was it a mere superstition? No. According to Dr. Ralph W. Morris of Chicago a full moon seems to make man quite unpredictable in his behaviour. He can do anything short of howling at the moon! The reason perhaps is in the fact that enzymes and many hormones are more active in him during the full moon. Psychiatrists say that the full moon can aggravate tension and anxiety. The police support this theory saying that this results in more crimes.



Did Moses Die in India?

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. He did not enter the chosen land himself—but showed his people the way to it. "And Moses went up from the plains of Maob unto the mountain of Nebo... So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the Land of Maob... over against Beth-Pora. But no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day," says the Bible.

An eminent historian of Kashmir, Mr. Fida Mohammed, asserts that Moses died and was buried near Mount Maob, about 50 km from Srinagar. Seventy years ago another historian, Mr. Mohammed Azam Dedmari, had tried to establish this. His finding has been reinforced by Mr. Fida, with more arguments. The place now known as Bandipora was called Bethpoer in bygone days. The location of the tomb is still called Nebu Ball.



More Sunlight, Please!

Do you know how Alexander the Great was snubbed by a philosopher? The philosopher was relaxing, leaning against a rock. Alexander, in his enthusiasm to patronise the gifted man, asked, "Can I do anything for you?" "Yes," replied the philosopher. "You can step aside and let me have the sunlight."

Fritz Hollowich of the University of Munster says that light sends signals not only to the brain's vision centre, but also to such centres in the brain that are responsible for our emotional and physical well-being. "Natural light," he says, "is a vital element, like water and air." As such, we must have sunlight in plenty. He warns against youngsters spending much time looking at television, because the nervous system suffers from the "spectral deficiency" of the light from the television tube.



The Unknown Bird

It measures five metres with wings spread, and weighs 15 kg. It belongs to the eagle family. Nothing more is known about it. Ornithologists are surprised that such a bird ever existed. Caught in a forest in Darrang, the bird is now in Gauhati zoo.



THE LEGEND OF THE GOLDEN VALLEY

—By Manoj Das

(Story so far! Raju, in his quest for the deity whose boon should breath life into the golden statue, has at last arrived in his destination, through a series of strange and adventures.)

13. THE THREE BOONS

Raju never knew that solitude and silence could be so charming. Slowly the eastern sky grew radiant.

Soon the earth was flooded with sunlight—but of a golden blue hue. The sun itself looked more like a lovely flame rising upward from an invisible brazier than a ball of blinding fire.

"I had never known such a dawn in my life! I wonder where I am" Raju exclaimed with joy and surprise.

"You are in a world that is quite close to the physical world, but not a part of it," the priest informed him. "The sun you see here gives much more than light. It can enlighten you when you are quite open in your mind."

Raju had begun to address the priest as the Yogi. It was because he had not been able to forget the tyrant priest of the Land of the Holy Dragon.

The Yogi led him into a

shrine. Inside it stood the image of a goddess of sublime beauty. "At last, O Mother, at last!" exclaimed Raju. A sense of profound gratitude brought tears to his eyes. He prostrated himself before the deity. When he raised his head, he was surprised to see a bunch of flowers at the deity's feet. Surely, they were not there a little before!

"Don't be amazed, my boy, your prayer and devotion became flowers. How do you think are flowers born? Aren't they the results of Nature's aspiration for beauty, harmony and purity—all that is divine? In your world flowers are given to men so that they learn to aspire. In this world they bloom out of the blue when one prays or aspires for something sweet," explained the Yogi.

Raju kept marvelling at the flowers. They were not unlike the flowers he knew in his own

land, but they were perfect in their form, and their fragrance inspired lofty ideas in one's heart.

"My boy, you cannot continue to be here for long. Better ask for the three boons soon," advised the Yogi.

Raju felt sad to learn that his stay there must be short. Next moment the vision of the golden statue, the face of the little prince who knew not how to smile, and that of the charming princess who knew not how to sing flashed in his memory. He did not mind to cut short his stay.

"Grant me, O Deity, that the golden statue in the Golden

Valley comes to life!" he said.

A flower that resembled a lotus fell from the pedestal on which the deity stood.

"Your prayer is granted. Slip the ring you are wearing onto her finger and she comes to life," said the Yogi.

Raju bowed to the deity. The prayer that was welling out of his heart next was the prayer to make it possible for him to marry the maiden that the golden statue would become! But he checked his temptation to put it forth. Had he not promised the boon of smile to the King of the Land of the Holy Dragon?

"Grant me, O Deity, that the





people of the Land of the Holy Dragon learn to smile!" he muttered.

A second lotus fell off the deity's hand.

"It is granted," the Yogi said.

Raju bowed again; again he checked his desire to put forth his fond prayer for marrying the maiden.

"Let the people of the Land of Contentment learn to sing!" he said with his hands folded.

A third lotus fell off the pedestal, but instead of falling on the ground, it remained hanging, its stalk sticking to the pedestal.

"My boy, it is not necessary

for those people to learn to sing. None but the princess you met yearns for the gift. Hence she alone shall learn to sing, the Yogi interpreted the movement of the lotus.

Raju bowed down. He reminded himself—and not without a feeling of pain—that he had no chance for obtaining another boon. But he was caught in the grip of a strong desire. What if he asks for a fourth boon—the boon for marrying the maiden?

The conflict in his mind did not last long. He heard a strange noise. He opened his eyes, but saw nothing. As if lands were sliding by him at a terrific speed—before his eyes could record a single scene. He remembered the Yogi saying that space, indeed, was a mysterious thing!

He felt dazed. He did not know how long he continued in that condition. When he came to senses, he found himself back on the blue mountain, under the tree that bore the star-fruit. The smiling princess was by his side.

Although the process of his return there was quite baffling to him, he spoke out eagerly. "I have obtained the boon, Princess, that would enable you

to sing!"

"I know that. The success of your mission alone could have brought you back here," said the princess.

Was the mission a success? Raju wondered. However, he did not feel it necessary to brood over his inability to obtain a fourth boon. His feeling of discontentment over it had left him now that he was in the Land of Contentment.

"Why not we sing?" he proposed.

"Why not?" responded the princess, agog with excitement. "Will you please teach me how to do it?"

Raju began to sing. The princess joined him. At first faltering though, she soon gathered momentum and sang charmingly. Raju looked on enchanted. But something most surprising awaited him. As the princess sang, she moved away from him. At one point Raju realised that she was growing as vaporous as a cloud. He stood up and ran towards her. But she had disappeared—just dissolved before him.

Raju had least expected such a thing. He ran in different directions, shouting for the princess, until he collapsed.



"You must not forget that the princess did not belong to the physical world. The creatures of her world remain satisfied with just what they are. An urge for singing means an urge for experiencing more than what you have. That is a human trait. Of all the citizens of the Land of Contentment the princess alone had that urge. She disappeared from her world—most probably to become a human being."

These words greeted Raju when he opened his eyes. By his side sat the kind hermit.

"Where am I?" Raju asked, a bit bewildered.

"Somewhere in the frontier



the Land of the Holy Dragon. But you must not waste your time here. You may satisfy yourself that the boon you obtained for the people of this country has enabled them to smile. Thereafter you must depart for the Golden Valley," said the hermit.

"How to depart? I have forgotten the way!"

The hermit smiled. "You have also forgotten that you know the secret formula for dissolving yourself for a while and then materialising yourself again. Well, now that you're back here, the formula should work," said the hermit.

Raju was anxious to be back on his native soil. At the hermit's bidding he climbed a hillock. Down on the other side was the land where he had had the first phase of his adventure.

The castle of the king was only a few yards away. Some of the guards saw him and recognised him. They ran into the castle. In a short time the king and the prince, accompanied by many of their servants and courtiers, appeared on the roof of the palace. They waved to Raju and Raju waved back. Soon many more gathered on the ground between the castle and the hill.

And all of them were smiling!

Raju was delighted. He would have loved to spend some time among them. They too were expecting him. But the hermit who stood behind him prompted him to hurry to the Golden Valley.

Raju bade goodbye to the hermit and then dissolved himself—wishing to be near the golden statue.

To Conclude



THE SHIVARATRI

As is well known, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are the three great Gods in Hindu Trinity. They, in fact, represent the three aspects of the Supreme Lord. Brahma is the Creator; Vishnu is the Sustainer; Shiva is the Destroyer.

Shivaratri (the Night dedicated to Lord Shiva) is observed all over India. The devotees pass the night awake—singing the glory of Lord Shiva or witnessing some play relating to some episode in which He features. It is a joyous night.

The Shiva temples hum with the chanting of Lord Shiva's many names. Of the numerous Shiva temples all over India, the festive spirit is most evident in the shrines at Varanasi, Chidambaram, Kalahasti and Khajuraho.

It is believed that those who pass the night awake thinking of Lord Shiva receive His blessings that bring them prosperity in life and peace thereafter.

A feast awaits the devotees the next day.



THE MAGIC CUP

In days gone by the Bodhisattva was a merchant in Varanasi. He was alert in his trade and honest with his customers. He earned much. He left his wealth to his only son and died.

The young man built a palatial house. People came to admire it. Among them were those who knew well how to flatter the young man. They became dear to him. The young man passed his time drinking and merrymaking. His friends

brought him dancing girls. Soon he took to gambling too.

When the servants in his shop saw that he was not interested in his business, they began stealing from the shop. In two years the business had to be closed down.

The young man did not care. His father had left enough money buried under the floor of the old house. He dug portions of it and spent freely.

One day he dug and dug deeper, but no more wealth was



found. He had dug out and squandered all.

When his flatterers understood that the young man had exhausted all he had, they deserted him. But they had thrown him into the habit of drinking. For that he needed money. He sold his father's old house and then his own palatial house. With the money he drank wine for another half year.

He had nothing left for selling. He took to the street and began begging from the rich. He drank at a liquor shop but could not pay. He was

humiliated and pushed out. He wandered like a vagabond.

The spirit of the Bodhisattva took pity on him. One evening, when the young man was in a sober mood, the spirit appeared before him.

"You have been utterly foolish in your conduct. Will you try to lead a wiser life if you get a chance?" asked the Bodhisattva.

"Yes, father, I'll do so," replied the young man.

The Bodhisattva gave him a cup and said, "This is a Wishing Cup. It will give you anything you wish. I hope, you will wish



only things that are worthy and live a good life."

The Spirit of the Bodhisattva disappeared. The young man sat down on a rock. He was very happy.

"I will ask the cup for many things one after another. I must get back everything I have lost and lead a decent and happy life. But"

The young man's eyes glittered when he thought of the very first thing he should do. "But at first I must quench my thirst. I had had no good drink for a whole week."

He wished for a choice drink. The cup got filled to its brim instantly. He drank it up and

then wished for more. He emptied the cup again.

"What a boon I have got!" he muttered, looking at the cup. He drank again and then joyfully tossed the cup up. As the glittering cup came down, he caught it and wished for more drink. Then he hurled the cup upward again. By that time his hands had become quite unsteady. He tried to catch the cup, but he could not. The cup fell on the stone, got shattered, and the shattered pieces rolled into a gorge.

In a bid to recover the cup the young man hurtled into the gorge. He never came up.

From the Buddha Jatakas



The Persian Prince

There was a king who had a beautiful daughter. When the king wanted to find a bridegroom for her, the princess said, "Father, I'll marry only the youth who'd excel me in warfare."

"Let it be so," said the king who loved fun and loved his daughter no less!

"But, father, one who would dare to challenge me to a fight and get defeated must pay the price for it," cooed the princess.

"What price would you demand of him?" asked the curious king.

"Nothing much, father, but his upper clothes, his horse and his sword. What is more, I'll inscribe on his back my name."

The king understood that the princess desired to humiliate those who would be defeated by her. Well, he agreed to the condition, for, as we said earlier, he loved fun!

And all those princes of the





wide world who too agreed to this condition were welcome to try their strength against the princess. One by one they returned, defeated and humiliated.

At last came the Prince of Persia. The king alerted him about the insult he might experience if defeated. But the prince was quite confident of himself.

The combat began. The princess, clad in the fighter's outfit, came out to the arena, riding a horse. Her face was veiled.

The prince confronted her. They fought with swords. A

long time passed. The princess realised that she had met more than her match. If the Persian prince was not overthrowing her, it was more out of courtesy than for any lack of capacity.

But the king, the court, and a large crowd of commoners witnessed the contest. The proud princess was in no mood to concede defeat before them. She unveiled her face and smiled at the prince.

The prince thought that it was a sign for him to stop fighting. He smiled back. His defence was slackened.

The princess, with a sudden move, threw the prince off his horse. She then jumped down and caught his hands backward.

The prince lay helpless. The king announced that the combat had ended. The princess was the victor.

The princess knew only too well that the prince was stronger than her. She had played a trick on him. Even then she did not stop the guards from stripping the Persian prince of his upper clothes and acquiring his horse and sword and inscribing her name on his back.

The Persian prince felt more angry than humiliated. He grew determined to avenge the wrongs

done to him. His father was much more powerful a king than the father of the princess. He could attack and destroy the castle of the princess. But he had had a glimpse of her face. He had begun loving her.

A month passed. One day the princess was out with her maids for a stroll in her garden. It was a very large ground with numerous trees bearing fruits and flowers.

An old man seated in a corner of the garden attracted her attention. Before him was spread a carpet. On the carpet were deposited a number of

precious jewels.

The princess was so surprised that she forgot to ask the old man how he entered the private garden. The jewels drew all her attention.

"Do you wish to sell these?" she asked the old man.

"No. One who marries me gets all this," replied the old man. Age seemed to have made his voice faint.

The princess and her maids laughed. "You are so old. Why are you eager to marry?" asked the princess.

"Just for my whim. I'll marry and then revoke the marriage.





"The girl will be free in a minute," replied the old man. "Only, she should sit on my horse, along with me, for a moment," he added.

The princess looked at her maids. "Are any of you willing to be the fellow's wife for a moment?" she asked.

All the maids were willing to become so, for the sake of the wealth.

The princess chose one of them. At the old man's feeble call, a priest came out from a hiding and solemnised the marriage. The old man was scarcely able to stand up. However, he was helped by the

priest to get onto the horse along with the bride. The horse trotted for a minute.

The old man then revoked the marriage. The girl was free to go away with all the jewels.

The princess, on a visit to the garden the next day, saw the old man—with another set of jewels spread out before him. His desire was no different from the previous day's.

The princess chose another maid to satisfy his whim. The marriage was performed; then it was dissolved; the maid returned to the castle richer.

For five days thereafter the same ritual was repeated. On the 6th day the old man mumbled to himself: "Tomorrow will be my last day here. I'll present the most wonderful diamond I have to the girl that marries me. Then I'll leave this place."

The princess wondered why she should not obtain the diamond herself. After all nobody was to know what she did with the old man. For her it was nothing more than a play since the marriage was to be dissolved in a moment.

That evening the princess went to the garden alone.

"I am prepared to



you," she whispered. The old man thanked her. The priest solemnised the marriage. As was the custom, the old man and the bride then rode the horse.

Next moment an iron hand was clamped against the bride's mouth. The horse ran at great speed. The princess soon lost her senses.

When she recovered she saw the old man looking at her and smiling.

"I am your lawful husband," he said.

"Indeed, you are. But what about revoking the marriage?" asked the princess timidly.

The old man laughed. He then removed his false beard and white wig. The princess

recognised him. He was the Persian prince.

"You defeated me through a trick. How can you take any objection to my marrying you through a trick?" asked the prince.

The princess blushed.

"You had inscribed your name on my back. That was not necessary. Your name is inscribed in my heart," said the prince again.

The princess blushed again.

The messenger of the prince met the father of the princess with a confidential letter from both of them. The king appreciated the strange situation. He soon arranged for an open ceremony to solemnise the marriage.





**True
Adventures**

A morning in the month of September in the year 1704 might not have been cooler than any other morning for a man in the town or for a man even in a ship. But it was quite cold for Alexander Selkirk. He had just been left on a desolate island off the coast of Mexico.

He had been a mate in a ship. He quarrelled with the captain. So disgusted was he that he wanted to be left alone—on that unknown island.

To the captain, who was no less disgusted with him, it was a welcome proposal. He put Selkirk on a boat. Two men rowed it towards the island. The captain looked on from the deck.

The boat went close to the island. Selkirk was asked to

jump onto a rock with his luggage that included some clothes, some food, a gun and some gun-powder.

The boat began moving away from him. Selkirk once looked at the island dominated by dense forest and silent hills and then looked at the boat and the ship.

Suddenly he gave out a howl: "Hey! Take me back. I don't want to be left here all alone!"

But the captain had had enough of him. "You chose to be there. Be there. We have obliged you once. We cannot go on obliging you every time."

The boat was tucked into the ship. The ship sailed away.

Selkirk had no other go than to enter the island. Sailors knew that the island was not inhabited.

by human beings. But nobody knew who inhabited it, if at all.

Selkirk cursed himself for his own foolish decision. Tears came to his eyes thinking of his distant motherland—Scotland. He had always been obstinate. He had caused a furore in his own village by defying the elders. When he was to be tried, he had escaped. He had joined the buccaneers—pirates who plundered the Spanish ships. In those days the Spanish ships traded in gold.

Selkirk found a small cave and spent his night there. He was not able to sleep for fear of wild beasts. The night passed peacefully. In the morning he

saw a tribe of goats grazing fearlessly in different parts of the island. He understood that no dangerous animal lived there.

But he was yearning to return home. Day after day he spent long hours standing or sitting on the highest peak, looking for a ship. Ships did pass by, but they were too far from him to hear his shout or see his signal.

Then came the monsoon. He could not move about in the open. His cave was likely to be flooded. He chose another cave almost at the middle of a hill. The new place was protected by tall trees and rocks.

By and by he developed a



knack for catching the goats. While he ate his catch, he also domesticated some of them. They yielded him milk.

One day he saw a ship that came there for a respite. He ran at it with great enthusiasm. But it was a Spanish ship. As soon as he recognised the Spanish sailors he ran away. The sailors pursued him. They were eager to catch an Englishman or a Scotsman in order to torment him. That was their sport in those days.

Selkirk had to remain in the hollow of a tree till the Spanish ship left the island.

Another time, as he tried to capture a wild goat, the goat gave him a good fight. Both of them fell into a deep pit. Selkirk swooned away—and lay in that condition for two or three days. When he recovered, he found

himself lying on the dead goat.

Four and half years passed. At last two English ships came there for water. Selkirk, clad in goatskin and looking abominable, sprang up before the voyagers. They were taken aback. One of the captains knew Selkirk earlier. They were amazed to hear his strange story. They took him with them and treated him kindly.

Selkirk was back in his native country, got married, and led a peaceful life for a while. He joined the crew of a ship again and died in 1721 as the master's mate of H.M.S. "Weymouth".

It is this Alexander Selkirk who was the inspiration behind the creation of Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe. Much of the incidents narrated by Defoe had really taken place in Selkirk's life.



NO MICE

An old woman wanted to see the king. The clerk at the gate demanded to know what her message was so that he could pass it on to the king.

"I have no food," said the woman.

"The king is in no mood to hear such things today. Think of telling him something else," advised the clerk.

"I'm poor—that is what I propose to say."

"Did I not say that the king looks grave today? Nothing serious should be spoken to him!" shouted the clerk.

"All right," said the woman, "tell him that there are no mice in my house."

"This might amuse the king, for he will understand that you are mad," commented the clerk. He went in and told the king what the woman had to say.

"I understand what she means to say. She has no food in her house. That is why mice do not come there," said the king and he saw to it that the woman went satisfied.





CHEAT VERSES CHEATS

In a certain town there lived a gentleman popularly called Chowdhury who was famous for his philanthropy. He was always eager to help others.

A young man who thought himself very clever once made up his mind to take advantage of the gentleman's generosity. He drew upon a scheme accordingly.

He covered his left leg with a kind of gum. The leg looked as though it had swelled. He took position under a tree in front of Chowdhury's house.

When Chowdhury came closer to him, the young man strained his facial muscles as if he was having much pain. "It has become unbearable. I know, once I come to you, my sorrow will end!" he said between false sobs.

Chowdhury gazed at the

young man's leg. Then he called out to his servants. They came running.

"Carry this sick man into our guestroom. Let him lie down on the bed. I shall send for a physician," he told his servants.

The young man had not anticipated such a situation. All he wanted was some money. He had no other go than let himself be carried into Chowdhury's house.

Two new physicians had lately appeared in the town. They knew something of the science of treatment, but they were really cheats. They had deceived and swindled many people in another town. They had escaped here when they were about to be arrested. Chowdhury asked the false physicians to take charge of the young man.



The false physicians did not take long to find out the young man's motive. They looked at each other meaningfully.

"I am afraid, we must amputate this patient's leg if he is to live!" said one of them.

"Right. My only suggestion is, we must do it without the slightest delay," said the other.

The young man grew panicky. He tried to sit up. But the physicians pushed him down to his bed and said, "Should you try it again, we'll be obliged to cut off both your legs!" The young man burst into a sob—a real one this time.

"Please have mercy on me,

I'm sorry for what I did!" he muttered.

"If you wish us to be merciful, then remain where you are. Do not murmur. We'll pay visits to you everyday," said the physicians.

The young man consented to it.

"How is your patient?" asked Chowdhury when the physicians were leaving his house.

"Sir! It's an extremely malign swelling. One in a million gets this disease. We'll do our best and leave the rest to the fellow's destiny," said the physicians feigning gravity in their voice.

"Please try to cure him. Don't



worry on account of expense. I'll bear the cost of all the medicines necessary and pay you to your satisfaction," said Chowdhury.

"Who is worrying on that issue? Who does not know of your nobleness? We'll do our best for your patient," said the physicians.

They paid visits everyday and bandaged the perfectly normal leg of the young man.

"Please let me go away now," the young man pleaded with them after a few days. "Shut up!" was the stock reply he received every time. They looked forward to a big fee from Chowdhury. They wanted to impress upon Chowdhury the fact that the young man had a difficult disease and it needed a long treatment.

Suddenly one day the

physicians learnt that the police were looking for them for their earlier misdeeds. They escaped to some unknown destination.

When the physicians were not seen for two days, the young man enquired of Chowdhury's servants about them and learnt that they had left the town. He got up and began walking.

"You are cured, are you?" Chowdhury asked him happily.

The young man fell at his feet. "Yes, Sir, I'm cured of my treacherous nature," he said. Then he narrated the story behind his false sickness.

"I desired to earn a living by cheating others, not realising that there were greater cheats in the field!" he concluded.

Chowdhury had a hearty laugh. He took pity on the man and gave him a job for an honest living.





"SIR,
THE ALIBI JACK
GIVES FOR HIS ABSENCE
IS, HE WAS KILLING
A GIANT!"

CHANDAMAMA DICTIONARY OF SELECT WORDS AND PHRASES

ALIBI (N) : The plea given by the suspect that he was elsewhere at the time of the commission of the crime. Any excuse for failure to do something.

ALTOGETHER : In slang "In the altogether" means in the nude.



DON'T SAY
EVEN THE
HEADMASTER
WAS
BORN
IN THE
ALTOGETHER!



WHILE
IN GREECE,
I ASKED FOR
AMBROSIA AT EVERY
SHOP. ONE GAVE ME
BREAD AND THE
REST BOO!

AMBROSIA (N) : In Greek mythology the food or drink of gods that conferred everlasting youth and beauty. It also means bee-bread.



AMPHIGORY (N) : Non-sense—verse. An example:

There was an old man who said, 'Hush!'
I perceive a young bird in this 'bush'
When they said, 'Is it small?'
He replied, 'Not at all!'
It is four times as big as the bush! — Edward Lear.
Nonsense Botany

AMPHISBAENA (N) : A fabulous two-headed snake. One such rare snake was in a zoo. The attendant inserted a board between its two heads and fed the heads one after the other. One day the board slipped. The second head saw the first head eating and, jealous, bit it. The first head bit back. The whole snake died.



"Sri Krishna"



ANABIOSIS N : Coming back to life after supposed death. Early in this century the Prince of Bhawal in Bengal, believed dead, was carried for cremation. A cyclone broke out. The pall-bearers fled. The prince woke up and walked away. He returned home after years. A case of anabiosis.



STORY OF INDIA-62

PRITHVIRAJ AND SAMYUKTA (III)

Prithviraj was soon joined by his dear friend and court-poet, Chand. Both of them had visited Kanauj in disguise. The pursuing soldiers were no match for their speed and courage.

At the frontier of Kanauj waited in ambush a select band of Prithviraj's soldiers. As soon as Prithviraj crossed the frontier they came out to the open and offered resistance to Jaychandra's soldiers.



The incident gave a great blow to Jaychandra's pride. His mind was occupied with only one thought—how to avenge his humiliation. He consulted his confidants and sounded some Rajput kings. But nobody would rise against Prithviraj.





At last a sinister idea occurred to him. He sent a messenger to Muhammad Ghuri. He offered to become his ally should he invade Delhi. Muhammad Ghuri was excited. The dream of conquering Delhi with Jaychandra's help possessed him.

In Delhi Prithviraj had built a new palace for Samyukta. Time was passing smoothly and happily for the royal couple. Free from the obligation to fight, Prithviraj gave his attention to the welfare of his people.



The combined army of Muhammad Ghuri and Jaychandra advanced upon Delhi. They set fire to villages as they advanced. The people and the guards were taken unawares.



The guards at the frontier of Prithviraj's kingdom came galloping to inform their king of the sudden invasion. As soon as Prithviraj heard of it, he commanded his army to get ready to fight.



Samyukta herself put the helmet on Prithviraj's head. Prithviraj bade her goodbye. In the meanwhile the enemy had reached the outskirts of Delhi. Their war-cry could be heard.

The army of Delhi was not prepared for such an attack. However, it got ready within minutes. Soon Prithviraj was out on the road, leading his army to face the invaders.





The battle ensued. While the soldiers of Prithviraj fought valiantly, they were miserably outnumbered by the joint forces of Jaychandra and Muhammad Ghuri. Fighting bravely, Prithviraj was grievously wounded and soon he breathed his last.

It was evening when the news of Prithviraj's death reached Samyukta. Quietly she ordered for a fire to be made. Putting a garland round Prithviraj's portrait, she then entered the fire.



With Prithviraj ended the Hindu rule over Delhi. Jaychandra could not pride in the victory for long. The very next year the ambitious Muhammad attacked Kanauj. His general, Qutab-ud-din, killed Jaychandra mercilessly.

(Continued)



SAMSON THE HERO (II)

Bereft of his hair, Samson was devoid of all strength and was easily captured.



The Philistines tortured him and blinded him. Then they threw him into a dungeon.



They were very happy at capturing Samson. Time passed. Inside the dungeon Samson's hair grew again.



One day the Philistines were feasting and making merry. Someone proposed, "Let's poke fun at Samson!"



The blind Samson was brought out of his dungeon and produced before the laughing assembly.



As the Philistines laughed at the helpless hero, he took backward steps and caught hold of two pillars.



With his hair grown again, he had recovered his strength. He suddenly pushed the pillars down.



Next moment the whole roof came crashing down, killing all the Philistine leaders.

(Concluded)





A RIDDLE

The way to the town was long and desolate. A gentleman who was passing by stopped under a tree for a little rest.

He saw three strangers resting there. One sat awake while the other two lay asleep.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" the gentleman asked.

The man who sat awake said, "Of us one is incapable of going abegging. The other one is deprived of a thing for which he is happy and unhappy. With that which cannot be retained even if we wish to retain it, they are going ahead peacefully through that which cannot be stopped."

The traveller was quite intrigued at the statement made by the man. He thought over it for a while. Bringing out a scrap of paper from his pocket, he

scribbled a note on it and handed it over to the stranger.

"Come to the king's court tomorrow. I hope, the king will be pleased to reward you," he said as he left.

The traveller was a courtier of the king. The paper he gave to the stranger was a permit for them to enter the court.

Next day, while the king sat in his court surrounded by his ministers and top officers, a sentry showed him a paper. The king looked at it, and recognised in it the signature of one of his courtiers. He asked the courtier, "Who are these three who demand admittance into the court?"

"My Lord, I know not who they are. One of them answered me in a quizzical manner. Though I could not make out anything of it, I felt that what he



said had a deep meaning. Perhaps the scholars here can explain his riddle—I thought," said the courtier.

The King asked the sentry to show the strangers in. At the King's asking the one who had thrown the riddle at the courtier stated the same thing again.

The king looked at the scholars in his court and asked them. "Who is incapable of going abegging? What is that without which one is at once happy and unhappy? What is it that cannot be retained even though one wished to retain it? What is it that with which one can go but which cannot be

stopped?"

"Your Highness, aren't we all incapable of going abegging?" observed one of the scholars.

"It is because you have no need for begging that you feel yourself incapable of going for it," said the king, dismissing the scholar's explanation.

All kept quiet. "I am surprised," said the king, "that my scholars fail to explain a riddle thrown by a man who seems to be illiterate!" commented the king.

"My lord, I have a granddaughter who is very quick at solving riddles. Should I summon her?" asked an old courtier.

The king consented to it. The girl was ushered into the court. She heard the riddle and closed her eyes for a moment. Then she explained, "My lord, the man who is given out as one incapable of going abegging has certainly the need to go for it. If he is incapable despite the need, it is because he is dumb. The thing without which one is happy and unhappy at the same time is intelligence. Without it one does not understand many complex problems. So one is happy. At the same time being deprived of a precious quality,



one is unhappy.

"What cannot be retained even if one wishes to retain it is one's body. That with which one can go but which cannot be stopped is time."

The girl concluded saying, "When the stranger said that his two companions lived in this condition peacefully, what he meant was that they spent most of their time sleeping!"

The King was amused. Inquiry showed that the eldest of the three was indeed dumb, the youngest was a fool. The two were the speaker's elder brother and younger brother respectively.

The king made arrangements for the three to live comfortably. He employed the girl who explained the riddle to look after the education of the women in his Kingdom.

Once a scientist said, "I have scanned the universe with my telescope. I find no God!"

Replied J. W. Hawley: "It is as good as saying I examined each part of my violin but found no music in any of it!"





*New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire*

The Wicked and the Ordinary

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Howls of wind were subdued by the sound of thunder, and moaning of jackals by the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree again and brought the corpse down.

As soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, I wonder if you are expecting a fitting reward for the pains you are taking. Know ye, that truth cannot be always proved. Your hopes may not be fulfilled. Let me give you an instance. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on:



was a rich landlord, almost a small raja, who reposed a great trust in his manager. The administration of his estate, employment of officials, realisation of dues, all were left to the decision of the manager.

The landlord never objected to anything his manager said or did.

People who had any complaint or who needed some favour met the manager. Soon those who went to meet him began carrying gifts for him. If some presented him with fruits or clothes, others gave him cash. By and by this became a practice. It was widely known that if one has to get any work done by the manager, one has to bribe him.

The manager seemed to give greater attention to those who gave him gifts. The money he received was spent in making ornaments for his wife. In a few years his wife looked overloaded with gold. Costly furniture, including sets of ivory-clad chairs, decorated his house.

"There is no recognition of merit here. One's capacity to bribe the manager is the only qualification for anything," people were heard saying.



There was a young man named Bhanu. He was poor, but he was an excellent scholar. At the same time he was a moralist. He met the manager several times, seeking a certain post. No doubt he deserved that post, but he did not get it. His friends advised him to bribe the manager. He was not willing to do that.

The landlord was once camping in a bungalow. It was raining. Bhanu found it a good opportunity to talk to him. He braved the rain and reached the bungalow and met him.

"Sir, I tell you that your manager is an evil and corrupt



fellow. He never decides a thing impartially. Don't you know this?" he blurted out.

The landlord was surprised. He had never heard such a complaint beforehand. He could not dismiss Bhanu's words as frivolous because he found Bhanu to be an educated and serious young man.

"Give me a little time. I shall make an investigation. If what you say proves true, I shall throw him out and make you my manager," said the landlord.

The landlord had lately constructed a new temple in a nearby village. No priest had been appointed. The landlord

asked two Brahmins to meet his manager separately. One of them was qualified for the post. The other one was illiterate. He gave the latter a bagful of money. "Give this to the manager when you request him to give you the post of the priest," he instructed him.

It so happened that the first of the two candidates, the scholarly one, had been a classmate of the manager. The manager was very happy to see his old friend. He promised to appoint him as the priest.

After the first Brahmin left, the second Brahmin met the manager. Although he offered him the money, the manager told him, "How can I appoint you as the priest when you can't read even a line of a scripture?"

The landlord duly learnt that the scholarly Brahmin who met the manager without any bribe had been appointed the priest. His impression that his manager was an honest man got confirmed. He called Bhanu and said, "Your complaint was baseless. My manager is not a corrupt man!"

"Sir, even a cursory look into the manager's house and at his wife, who is bedecked with ornaments like a deity, should

be enough to convince you that your manager is corrupt!" asserted Bhanu.

The landlord grew pensive. He again asked for time.

Next day he paid a visit to the manager's house without giving any notice to him. The manager was delighted as well as excited. He drew an old chair and offering it to his master, said, "It is a pity that I don't have a better chair to offer to you, sir!"

The manager's wife came out with hot milk. While offering it to the landlord, she murmured, "It was not in my luck to serve you in a silver tumbler!"

The landlord smiled and said, "Don't you worry. It was a sudden inspiration in me to take to this road. I just wanted to have a rapid survey of the nearby villages."

The landlord saw no costly furniture in the house, nor did he see a single ornament in the person of the manager's wife.

What he did not know was, the manager's brother, who was celebrating his daughter's marriage, had borrowed the fine sets of chairs, tables and silver utensils for a week. The lady had taken off her ornaments for cleaning and polishing them as she was to attend the wedding



the next day!"

The landlord called Bhanu and said, "Young man, you must be awfully jealous of my manager! You deserve punishment for speaking ill of an innocent man. However, you may go!"

"Innocent? Good! Sir, your manager is a"

"Stop! You can go," the landlord made an impatient gesture.

The young man left the place in utter bewilderment.

The vampire fell into a brief silence and then resumed in a challenging tone, "O King, does it not prove that one can be



wicked and evil and yet be spared of all consequence? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your shoulders!"

Answered King Vikram forthwith: "Every deed, good or evil, is bound to have its consequence. But the consequence is not always evident. If the manager was not caught at the moment, it does not mean that he will never be caught. Punishment may come to one in a hundred different ways.

"The question is, was the

manager really wicked and evil? Bhanu might have been a worthy candidate for a post. But there is nothing to show that one who got the post for which Bhanu aspired was unworthy. Did the manager ever demand any bribe of anybody? No. If the people bribed him, the evil was more in the people than in him. All we can say about him is, he was an ordinary man. There is a difference between the wicked and the ordinary."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded the reply than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

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THE WINDFALL

Harihar worked as Sethji's gardener. One day, while watering the plants, he heard someone's footsteps behind him. He turned back and saw a stranger with a dignified bearing.

"Aren't you Harihar?" asked the stranger.

"I am," replied Harihar. "How did you know me, sir?"

"Where were you ten years ago?" asked the stranger again, without answering Harihar.

"I was a mali in the garden of Babu Kishore Das of Rajpur, sir," said Harihar.

"I knew that. I just wanted to be sure. I was his lawyer. You might not remember me as so many people used to throng Kishore's house," informed the lawyer.

Harihar bowed to him.

"Sir, Babu Kishore Das was a

saintly man. The time I spent in his service was the happiest period in my life. Had he not left the country with his wife all on a sudden, I would have remained in his service all my life," said Harihar with a sigh. Then he asked anxiously, "Vakil Sahib, is Babu Kishore hale and hearty?"

The lawyer's face fell. "Harihar! He is no more. Do you know why he went abroad? For treatment of a disease. But he could not be cured, I regret to say..."

"What do you say, sir!" cried out Harihar. He could not check his tears.

The lawyer too wiped his eyes. He then told Harihar the details of Babu Kishore's ailment. Harihar was a bit consoled to learn that Babu Kishore had well provided



thousand rupees," said the lawyer as he handed out a bag to Harihar.

For a moment Harihar could not quite comprehend the situation. "What do you say, sir? Ten thousand? For whom?"

"It's for you, Harihar, it's for you!" said the lawyer with a smile. "Why d'you think I took so much trouble to trace you to this town?"

"What! Ten thousand rupees for me?" cried out Harihar. "What had I done for my noble master that he was so kind to me?"

"He must have felt something noble in you!" commented the lawyer.

He then took leave of Harihar.

Harihar lived in a hut in a corner of Sethji's garden. Sethji's wife's brother, the little Poltu, was an imp. He often ransacked Harihar's hut. In view of this Harihar decided to hide the bag in the hollow of an old tree.

But Poltu observed him from the roof of Sethji's house. In the evening he climbed the tree and took out the bag. He gave it to Sethji. Sethji was as happy as he was surprised. He could not think how a poor mali managed

all his dependants.

"God is great. I am sure, my master is in peace in heaven. He had been the cause of peace and happiness for many in life," said Harihar.

"You are right, Harihar," said the lawyer. "My friend Kishore was an angel. Even in his death-bed he did not stop worrying about the welfare of others. As you know, he was childless. He drew up a will dedicating his property to charitable institutions. He left handsome amounts of money for so many people who were poor and for whom he had love. Here is your share—ten

to accumulate such a big amount of money.

Sethji was among the richest men in the town. Even then the windfall of ten thousand rupees made him so happy that he felt like dancing. He decided to hide it at some secret place.

Late in the evening Harihar met Sethji and said, "Sir, I have decided to retire to my village. Be pleased to employ someone else as your mali."

"Very well, Harihar, I won't stand in your way," said Sethji. The ten thousand rupees had gladdened him so much that he not only gave Harihar his salary up to the day, but also gave him a hundred rupees more!

Harihar was surprised at Sethji's generosity. "Thanks a lot, sir," he said.

Sethji was laughing in his sleeves. He was visualising the scene when Harihar would find his wealth gone! The poor chap would cry and perhaps go crazy. Well, that is his luck! What use can the fellow make of ten thousand rupees? Sethji alone could use it in the right way!

These were Sethji's thoughts. He desired Harihar to leave soon.

Harihar left for his village before sunrise.



At noon Poltu asked Sethji, "Where is the bag I found?"

"It is safe, boy, quite safe. You need not worry about it," replied Sethji, laughing.

"I thought Harihar would make a commotion when he discovered his loss. Is it not surprising that he went away peacefully?" asked the naughty boy.

"Harihar is a good fellow, but a foolish one, I suppose. Excited at the reward he received from me, he must have forgotten his hidden treasure. He may remember it on his way home and return. Surely, he won't suspect us!" said Sethji.





"I know that we have nothing to worry on that account. So many people come to your garden. How can he be sure who took away his bag? But tell me, where did you hide it?" Poltu insisted on knowing.

"At the safest possible place. Not even the gods can imagine of it."

"Is that so? Where? Please tell me, where?" Poltu showed great eagerness to find out.

"Lest Harihar should raise a hue and cry and report his loss to the police and lest the police should search our house, I hid the bag in the hollow of that old tree, yonder!" revealed Sethji.

Poltu's eyes bulged out with anxiety. He ran to the tree, climbed it, and thrust his hand into the hollow, only to be stung by a bee. There was no bag.

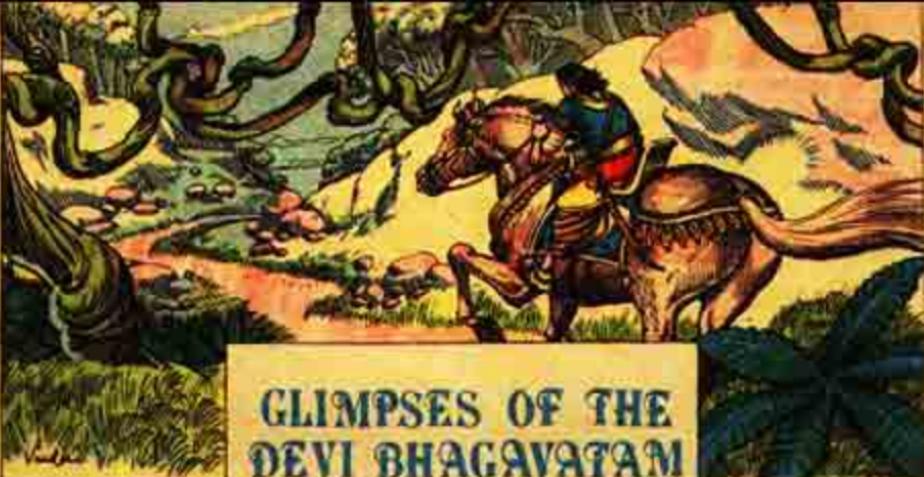
He returned crying. "What did you do, my brother-in-law? Harihar had deposited his bag there. You only restored the bag to its place!"

Sethji looked crestfallen. "That explains how Harihar left us in peace! He found his money where he expected to find it! What a fool I was to give him a reward!"

Both Sethji and his worthy brother-in-law sat speechless for a long time.

There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it is hard to tell which one of us ought to reform the rest of us.





GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM

Long long ago there was a king named Surath who ruled over a vast kingdom. He was a just king. He gave all his time to doing good things. He never envied any other king, nor was he ever proud.

Because the king had no desire to wage war against anybody, the commander of his army did not find it necessary to keep the army in good shape. He neglected his duty. No new soldier was recruited; those who had grown old were not asked to retire.

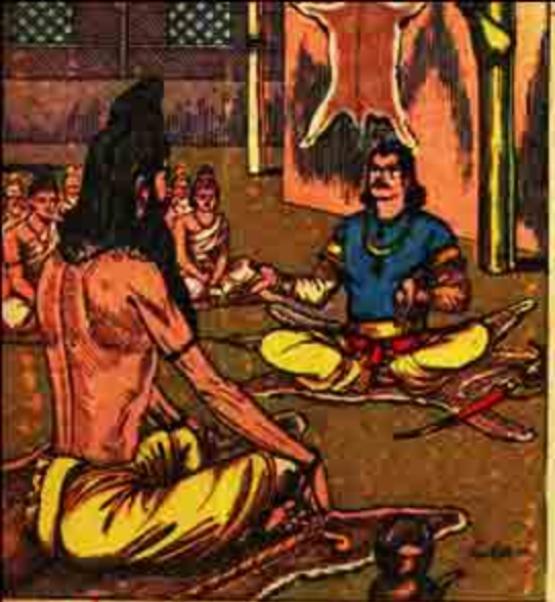
There were ambitious kings who took note of the condition of King Surath's army. Their

spies spent long time in King Surath's capital. The movement of the spies attracted the attention of some of the noblemen. One or two of them told the king, "It is time we reorganised our army. Otherwise our kingdom may be attacked."

Such warnings only made the king laugh. "What makes you think so ill of the other kings? Have they not been always friendly towards us?"

King Surath's faith in the other kings suddenly received a jolt when his kingdom was attacked by an ambitious neighbour. He fought as





fervently as he could, but he could not stop the enemy from advancing.

At last his town was surrounded by the enemy army. King Surath was not in his palace, but in a camp outside.

"My lord, the enemies are anxious to lay their hands on you. I entreat you to escape immediately," said a spy.

King Surath understood that the enemy planned to kill him instantly. There was no chance for his collecting the members of his family who were inside the palace. The palace was already under seize.

The king galloped away under

the cover of darkness. He rode on for two days and nights. It was morning when he entered a forest. He saw a river flowing by sweetly. Animals were moving about freely. Soon he could hear the chanting of Vedic hymns.

He advanced in the direction of the chanting. He saw a hermitage. The serene atmosphere charmed him. He got off his horse and wandered in the place. Before long he saw the sage who lived there with his disciples.

Surath prostrated himself to the sage. When the smiling sage wanted to know who he was, Surath said, "O Great Soul, I am King Surath, deprived of my kingdom because of an unexpected attack from another king. My castle, along with my family, has fallen into the hands of the enemy. I am at my wit's end. I take refuge with you. Kindly show me the way out of my predicament."

The sage placed his hand on the king's head and said, "Do not lose hope. Remain calm and fearless. Also, do not nurse any feeling of vengeance. The situation will change."

Surath got back the peace of his mind. He continued

there like the other inmates of the Ashram.

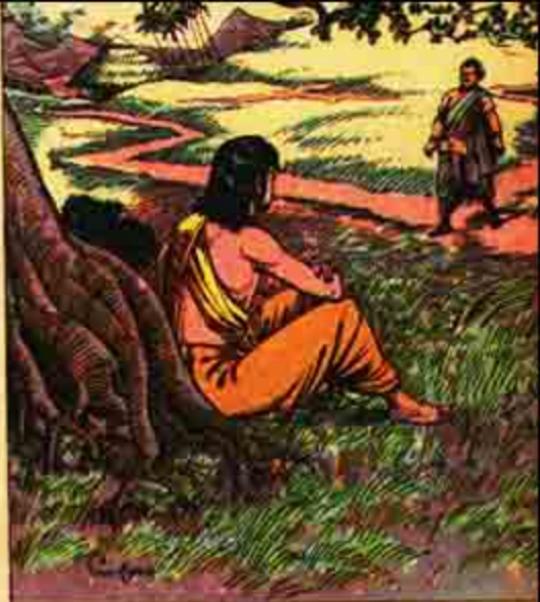
One day Surath sat under a tree brooding over his misfortune. He saw a traveller looking depressed and tired.

"Who are you? What brought you into this forest?" asked the king.

"I am a merchant. I was rich and pious too. I did my best to bring comfort and happiness to all the members of my family. But such is my lot that I was betrayed by everybody. Even my wife and my son conspired against me and made it difficult for me to live in my own home. That is why I am here. Who are you?" "I am King Surath. You might have heard of my defeat. I was roaming as a destitute. A compassionate sage who lives here took pity on me and gave me shelter," said the king. "You too can be here in peace," he added.

"No, O good King, I cannot be in peace. I am haunted by the thoughts of my home. My unworthy son will squander away all my hard-earned wealth. Then he too will become a destitute like me!" the merchant said.

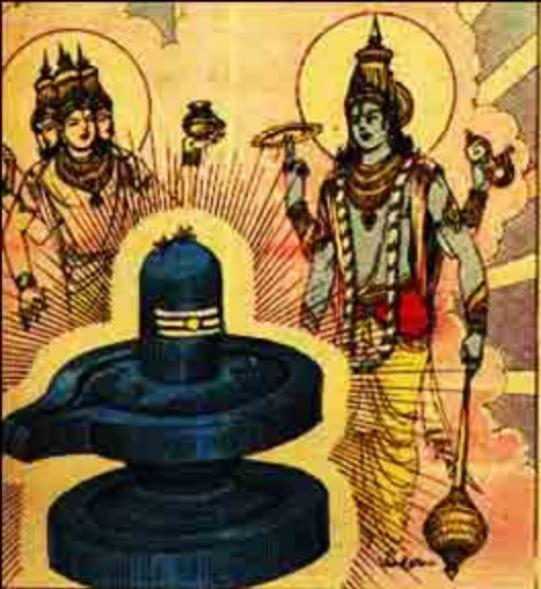
"You are a strange fellow. What does it matter to you if



your son, who proved so ungrateful and cruel to you, becomes a destitute? Let us go to the sage. He alone can show us some light," said the king and he led the merchant to the sage.

"O Sage, here is yet another unfortunate fellow. Taking advantage of his simplicity, his wife and son drove him out of his home. But he is missing them despite their cruelty towards him. Kindly tell us how we can get over our crises," the king said to the sage.

"My son, who does not suffer pain when engrossed in ignorance? You are only ordinary mortals. Even the



"great Gods lose their balance when they submit themselves to the force of ignorance," said the sage. He then recounted an instance:

This hapened ages ago. Once Brahma and Vishnu simultaneously wondered—what becomes of one when one is totally given to ignorance?

Ignorance descended on both of them as a result of this thought of theirs. Soon they met, but they hardly recognised each other.

"I am the Creator of this universe," said Brahma in the way of introducing himself.

"It would have been wiser on

your part not to be so boastful of your function. Who sustains this universe? Myself. Have you forgotten the fact that once two demons named Madhu and Kaitabha terrorised you and I went to your rescue? Had not similar situations arisen so many times?" asked Vishnu.

"How do you forget of your own predicaments? I remember how you were once saved by the Divine Mother!" retorted Brahma.

Shiva saw how Brahma and Vishnu, in order to have a taste of ignorance, were quarrelling. He spoke out: "Listen, stop disputing each other's greatness. Can you measure my greatness? One who can do that first will prove himself greater."

Brahma and Vishnu took up the challenge. Vishnu entered the nether-world to locate the platform on which Shiva stood. Brahma went up into the sky to determine his height.

Neither Vishnu nor Brahma, however deep and however high they went respectively, could see the beginning or the end of Shiva.

Brahma found a flower falling down. Presuming that it fell from Shiva's head, Brahma took hold of it.



"See, I could measure Shiva's height. This flower is the proof," Brahma told Vishnu.

"Is this true?" Vishnu asked the flower.

"True," replied the flower.

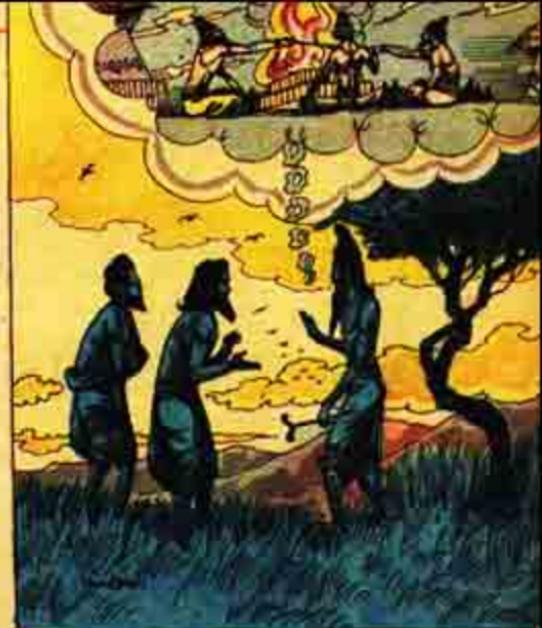
Vishnu did not believe the flower. "I'll ask Shiva," he thought. Shiva who was disappearing, said, "It is not true. The flower was coming down when Brahma caught it. He has not been able to reach my end." Thereafter Shiva made that flower disqualified for being offered to Gods.

Then Shiva laughed and Brahma and Vishnu woke up from the spell of ignorance and joined in the laughter.

The sage, after narrating this episode, said, "Now you know even the great Gods became victims of ignorance. There is only one way to rise above ignorance and all the sufferings that come from ignorance."

"What is that way? Please tell us about it," King Surath appealed to the sage.

The sage taught them the discipline by which they should be able to invoke the Grace of the Divine Mother. At their request, he also taught them the hymns and prayers to the Divine Mother.



The king and the merchant took leave of the sage. They chose a secluded spot on a river and devoted themselves to the worship of the Divine Mother.

They remained pure in their thoughts and actions and followed every law given them by the sage. After two years they had only a flitting glimpse of the Divine Mother.

They were sad that the vision did not last; they could not put their prayers before her. They meditated for yet another year. When they saw no result, they prepared a fire wishing to sacrifice themselves in it.

But out of the fire emerged





the luminous Goddess and offered to grant them the boons they desired.

King Surath wanted security for his family and wanted his kingdom back. The boon was granted. In a few days he was found out by his subjects who threw out the usurper and

restored his throne to him. He ruled happily for a long time.

The merchant had in the meanwhile lost all interest in his wealth and family. He prayed for true knowledge. His prayer was granted. True knowledge flashed in his heart. He lived as a sage, in the unfailing love of the Divine Mother.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





Quarrel And Peace

For a long time there was peace between Ratnagiri and Himgiri. The people of the two kingdoms lived happily, trading and co-operating with each other.

But once some of the villagers living along the frontiers of the two kingdoms quarrelled among themselves. The quarrel spread to other areas. The people of the two kingdoms soon became enemies of each other. Trade and communication between the two countries came to a halt.

Soon the two kingdoms prepared to attack each other. War preparations were afoot. This development caused much worry to King Subhendra of Vishnupur.

Vishnupur was a large and prosperous kingdom, defended by a powerful army. There was no question of either Ratnagiri or Himgiri matching Vishnupur in strength. Subhendra was a peace-loving king. He never coveted others' territory.

But all those who came to trade with his country found their way through either Ratnagiri or Himgiri. Because of the uncertain atmosphere in the two countries they stopped visiting Vishnupur. King Subhendra realised that his kingdom would suffer much loss if the two smaller kingdoms continued to quarrel. If there was a war between Ratnagiri

and Himgiri, Vishnupur would suffer even after the war was over. It is because the two kingdoms would face famine and misery and nobody would like to travel through their territories for fear of bandits.

"Let us attack both Ratnagiri and Himgiri and make them parts of our kingdom," proposed King Subhendra's general. The king did not accept the proposal.

His minister whispered another proposal to him. That appealed to the king.

Words were sent to the kings of both the smaller kingdoms to the effect that Vishnupur had decided to conquer them one after another, in two months. They could prepare to defend themselves.

The two kings were taken aback. They least expected such

a move from the peace-loving king, Subhendra. Hurried consultations took place between the two. They knew that it would be impossible for any one of them to face Subhendra. They decided to unite and resist Vishnupur's design on them.

Three months passed. There was no sign of Vishnupur leading her army against any of the two kingdoms. However, the two kingdoms had forgotten their quarrel.

Messengers of Subhendra met them and said, "Our king has given up his plan to annex your territories. He is pleased to note that you have become friends again."

The two kings realised why King Subhendra had threatened them with an attack. They felt grateful to him.





LUCK IN A NEEDLE

Ravi, Ramesh and Anand were close friends in their childhood. When they grew up, the first two took to business and became rich. But Anand remained poor.

One day Ravi told Ramesh, "It is a pity that our dear friend Anand is unable to lead a smooth life. We should do something for him."

"What can we do? I have often thought of giving him a job in my shop. But if I have not proposed this to him, it is because he might feel uneasy at being my employee," said Ramesh.

"Better I give him some money," said Ravi. "Let him start a business of his own."

Both the friends met Anand.

Giving him a thousand rupees, Ravi said, "Invest it in some trade. We wish you well."

Anand received the money gratefully. Next day he tied up the money in a small piece of cloth and tucked it in his turban and left for the bazar. He wanted to discuss with some merchants his plan to open a shop in his own village.

He was walking along a lonely path. Suddenly a large falcon swooped down upon him and flew away with his turban. Anand returned home sad.

After six months Ravi and Ramesh came to see him. They found that there had been no change in Anand's condition. Anand told them how he lost his

Ramesh took his statement to be true. Ravi, however, suspected that he had squandered away the money. But he did not say anything.

This time Ramesh gave him a thousand rupees and asked him to try his luck with it.

Anand decided to be more cautious this time. He put the money in a small bag and hid it in an earthern pot that contained husk.

Next day he was having his meal before starting for the bazar. His wife said, "There was no salt in the house. Luckily a fellow came looking for husk. I gave away whatever husk I had

collected over the last few months and bought some salt."

Her words fell on Anand like a thunderbolt. "You gave away the pot that was outside the kitchen, did you?" he asked.

"I did!" replied his wife, unable to appreciate his shock.

Anand felt so much depressed that he could not speak for a long time. Six months later his friends came to see him again. They were surprised that Anand's condition had still not improved. Anand told them how he lost the money he had received from Ramesh.

This time Ramesh too thought that he might have



spent the money foolishly. The two friends went away, feeling sad and a bit annoyed.

In the evening a fisherman met Anand's wife. "Sister!" he said. "We are going for fishing in a new lake tomorrow. Unfortunately my net needs repair. Can you lend me your needle for tonight? I promise to give you the first good fish I catch!"

The fisherman went away with the needle.

Next day the fisherman's daughter came with a big fish. "This is for you," she said.

Anand's wife cut the fish. Inside it was found a small

stone. Their little son picked it up and began to play with it in front of their house.

The stone attracted a passer-by. He asked the boy to give it to him. The boy declined. The man tried to take it away from him forcibly. The child cried. That brought Anand to the scene. The man ran away.

Why was the man so eager to have the stone? Anand grew curious. He examined the stone. It appeared unusually bright. He took it to the town the next day and showed it to the best jeweller there.

The jeweller's face brightened up. "This is a



diamond," he said. "I can pay you twenty thousand rupees for this!"

What an unexpected boon! Anand thanked the jeweller and received the money. He invested it in a business and soon made a handsome profit. Within a year his friends heard of the change that had taken place in his life.

They came to see him. Anand received them with great love. Ravi was under the impression that though Anand did not admit it, it was his money that had made him rich. Ramesh too thought that it was his money that had brought luck to Anand.

At Anand's request his two friends lived in his house for three days. The unexpected happened on the third day. Anand's two sons were playing under a tree. One of them

hurled a stone at a bird's deserted nest. The nest came down. Inside it was found Anand's lost turban—containing Ravi's gift of a thousand rupees.

The same day a large quantity of husk was purchased by Anand's servants for his new dairy. While the husk was being poured into a spacious container, Anand observed something else slipping into the container along with the husk. He drew it out. It was his lost bag containing Ramesh's gift.

Anand was amused; Ravi and Ramesh felt amazed. At Anand's request, they took back their money.

"What our generous help could not achieve, a needle could!" the two friends observed.



A BARGAIN

Bhajan Gupta, the great miser, once dreamt an unusual dream. "Spend a hundred rupees in charity. You will get a thousand!" a voice told him in his dream.

After much hesitation he decided to risk the money. He distributed hundred rupees among the poor. After two days he came across a buried jar. It contained a thousand rupees!

A month passed. He dreamt a similar dream. This time the voice directed him to spend a thousand rupees in charity so that he can get ten thousand rupees. Bhajan threw a feast for the poor spending a thousand rupees. A week later his maternal uncle died, leaving behind ten thousand rupees. Bhajan inherited the amount.

Six months passed. Bhajan's wife had a dream. She was asked to give away ten thousand rupees in charity so that a lakh of rupees will be hers.

Bhajan heard his wife's dream. There was no question of having any doubt about its truthfulness. He gladly spent ten thousand rupees for a grand feast.

The next day he died—leaving a lakh of rupees to his wife!



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. D. Jyothihas Raju



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Can you formulate a caption in a few words to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 25/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for December '81 goes to:

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PICKS FROM THE WISE

If I had read as much as other men, I should have known no more than other men.

—Thomas Hobbes

To be seventy years young is sometimes far more cheerful and hopeful than to be forty years old.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

How easy it is for man to die rich, if he will but be contented to live miserable.

—Henry Fielding



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